



AMERICAN SAMOA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

P.O. Box PPA

Pago Pago, American Samoa 96799

TOGIOLA T.A. TULAFONO
Governor

FAOAA.SUNIA
Lt. Governor

TOAFA F.T. VAIAGAE PH.D.
Director

Phone: (684) 633-2304
Admin. Fax: (684) 633-5715
Programs Fax: (684) 633-5801

Information Release Authorization Form

Tuesday, February 15, 2011

- ☒ **Newspaper**
- ☒ **Radio/Television**
- ☒ **Public Notice**

Attached is an Information Release issued by our office (AS-EPA). We would like to ask your assistance in making this information available to the public immediately, via your broadcasts or news publications. For additional information, kindly contact the AS-EPA Director, Fanuatele Dr. To'afa Vaiaga'e, or Tumau Lokeni Iese, Environmental Awareness & Education Program Manager at 633-2304. Fa'afetai tele lava.

- ☒ Governor's Office, Tapuitema
- ☒ Director, Department of Public Information (KVZK-TV)
- ☒ Malama TV Channel 4 News
- ☒ Samoa News
- ☒ Samoa Post
- ☒ KHJ FM 93.1 Radio Station
- ☒ WVUV V103.1 Radio Station
- ☒ KSBS FM92.1 Radio Station
- ☒ KNWJ FM104.7 Radio Station

Approved by: _____

[Signature]
Fanuatele Dr. To'afa Vaiaga'e
Director, AS-EPA

Date: _____

2/15/11

Description:

Title/Heading:

AS-EPA reminds the business community of Plastic Shopping Bags Ban



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PRESS RELEASE

**AS-EPA reminds the business community of Plastic Shopping Bag Ban
on February 23, 2011**

The American Samoa Environmental Protection Agency (AS-EPA) would like to inform and remind the public and the business community that as of February 23, 2011 the Plastic Shopping Bag Ban (PSBB) law will be fully enforced. Starting on this day, all business establishments are prohibited from giving or selling plastic shopping bags to consumers. This includes places where goods, food, food products, ware or products are offered to the public for sale or lease including markets, grocery, and retail merchandise stores. It also includes anyplace where food is prepared, mixed, cooked, baked, smoked, preserved, bottled, packaged, handled, stored, manufactured, and sold or offered for sale including restaurants, dining establishments, fast food businesses, road-side food sales and farmers markets.

Although AS-EPA appreciates the proactive efforts from several business establishments in securing their own biodegradable plastic bags, these bags must be approved by AS-EPA to ensure compliance with laws and regulations set forth by the Fono. Under the current PSBB law, the only plastic bags allowable are those that meet ASTM (American Society for Testing and Material) International Standard D6400 and those made from non-petroleum-based biodegradable plastic such as cellulose based or other substances that microorganisms can break down into carbon dioxide, water, or compost (humus) with no generated products (final or immediate) being detrimental to public health.

It is important for business establishments that are ordering their own biodegradable bags, including distributors and suppliers, to provide AS-EPA with the specification of the bags for our review to ensure compliance with the required standards. On February 23, 2011, all business establishments with plastic bags that have not been submitted for AS-EPA's review and approval will be served with a Stop Order Notice, cited, or have the bags seized.

The PSBB Task Force, comprised of the Department of Commerce, Department of Public Safety, led by AS-EPA, will fully implement the law on February 23, 2011. According to AS-EPA Director, Fanuatele Dr. T. Vaiaga'e, in the long term this law will hopefully be the first of many to change our behavior towards the environment and reduce our dependency on plastic non-biodegradable material. In a world that is impacted by climate change, green house gas emission, population increase, and development growth, it is important that we start implementing measures to sustain and preserve our natural resources and protect them from pollutants that threaten their existence.

AS-EPA would like to thank the business community and the public for their cooperation and patience as we transition away from the old plastic shopping bags into alternative bags that are environmentally friendly. For more information, please contact AS-EPA at 633 2304 or visit our website at www.asepa.gov.



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AS-EPA encourages all business establishments to use plastic shopping bag alternatives such as biodegradable bags, paper bags, cloth bags, or traditional woven bags. The public is encouraged to save and reuse alternative bags provided by business establishments for future use. Although the PSBB law prohibits the distribution/sale of plastic shopping bag at business establishments, the public is encouraged to reuse old plastic shopping bags.

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